WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for inducing apoptosis in cells of a mammal by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of antagonizing the interaction between an onconeural antigen and an apoptosis-inducing protein.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said cells are dysproliferative cells.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said dysproliferative cells are cancer cells.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said cancer is a gynecological cancer.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said gynecological cancer is ovarian or breast cancer.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said cells are normal cells.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said normal cells are germ cells.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2, cdr3, Nova, Hu, or amphiphysin.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said apoptosis-inducing protein is a transcription factor.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said transcription factor is N-Myc or C-myc.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said agent is an antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof binds to said onconeural antigen.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2, cdr3, Nova, Hu, or amphiphysin.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof binds to cdr2.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said agent is an HLZ region-binding molecule.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein said agent is an HLZ region-binding polypeptide fragment of an onconeural antigen.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said agent is an HLZ region-binding fragment of cdr2.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said agent is a polypeptide comprising amino acids 16 through 192 of cdr2 (SEQ ID NO:1) or amino acids 65 through 140 of cdr2 (SEQ ID NO:2).

20. A method for treating a mammal suffering from a dysproliferative disease by administering a therapeutically effective amount of an agent capable of antagonizing the interaction between an onconeural antigen and an apoptosis-inducing protein.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said dysproliferative disease is cancer.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said cancer is a gynecological cancer.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein said gynecological cancer is ovarian or breast cancer.

24. The method of claim 20 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2, cdr3, Nova, Hu, or amphiphysin.

25. The method of claim 20 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2.

26. The method of claim 20 wherein said apoptosis-inducing protein is a transcription factor.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said transcription factor is N-Myc or C-myc.

28. The method of claim 20 wherein said agent is an antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein said antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof binds to said onconeural antigen.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2, cdr3, Nova, Hu, or amphiphysin.

31. The method of claim 28 wherein said antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof binds to cdr2.

32. The method of claim 20 wherein said agent is an HLZ region-binding molecule.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein said agent is an HLZ region binding

polypeptide fragment of an onconeural antigen.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein said agent is an HLZ region-binding fragment of cdr2.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein said agent is a polypeptide comprising amino acids 16 through 192 of cdr2 (SEQ ID NO:1) or amino acids 65 through 140 of cdr2 (SEQ ID NO:2).

36. A method for identifying an agent capable of promoting apoptosis by antagonizing the interaction between an onconeural antigen and an apoptosis-inducing protein comprising the steps of

i) preparing a mixture comprising an onconeural antigen or a fragment thereof and an apoptosis-inducing protein or a fragment thereof, said mixture being part of a cell-free or cell-based test system;

ii) contacting said mixture with an agent being evaluated for its ability to antagonize the interaction between said onconeural antigen and said apoptosis-inducing protein;

iii) evaluating the extent of interference by said agent of the interaction between said onconeural antigen and said apoptosis-inducing protein; and

iv) determining from said extent of interference the capability of

said agent to interfere with said interaction

37. The method of claim 36 wherein one or both of said onconeural antigen or a fragment thereof and said apoptosis-inducing protein or a fragment thereof additionally includes a detectable polypeptide sequence.

38. The method of claim 36 wherein said interaction is determined by assessing the decrease caused by said agent in the extent of binding of said onconeural antigen or a fragment thereof with said apoptosis-inducing protein or a fragment thereof.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said extent of binding is determined using electrophoretic means.

40. The method of claim 38 wherein one of said onconeural antigen or apoptosis-inducing protein or fragments thereof is immobilized during the determination of said extent of interference.

41. The method of claim 38 wherein the extent of binding is determined in a GST pull-down assay.

42. The method of claim 38 wherein said extent of binding is determined in a coprecipitation assay.

43. The method of claim 38 wherein said extent of interference is determined by assessing the extent of transcriptional activity by said transcription factor.

44. The method of claim 36 wherein said extent of interference is determined using a whole cell assay and employing immunohistochemical means for quantitating the level of transcription factor in the subcellular compartments.

45. The method of claim 36 wherein said extent of interference is measured by quantitating cell death in a whole cell assay.

46. The method of claim 36 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2, cdr3, Nova, Hu, or amphiphycin.

47. The method of claim 36 wherein said onconeural antigen is cdr2.

48. The method of claim 36 wherein said apoptosis-inducing protein is a transcription factor

49. The method of claim 48 wherein said transcription factor is N-Myc or C-myc.